

**Statement of Norman Y. Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
Before the  
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee  
United States Senate  
May 21, 2002**

Good Morning Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, and members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you to give you an update on where we are, six months after the President signed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) into law. Accompanying me here today is the Honorable John W. Magaw, my Under Secretary of Transportation for Security and the head of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). John has the day-to-day responsibility to build TSA up to full strength, perhaps the largest undertaking to create a new Federal agency since the Second World War, and he must do this under extremely tight mandates that you established last year in ATSA.

On February 5<sup>th</sup> of this year my deputy, Dr. Michael Jackson, appeared before you and gave you a detailed briefing midway between the 60<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> day following ATSA's enactment on November 19, 2001. Much has occurred since then.

When we last testified before this Committee, John Magaw had only recently been confirmed by this Committee and the full Senate. We had few staff on board TSA. We had not yet taken over the screening functions at airports throughout the United States. We had no federal screeners at all. We had not yet hired any Federal Security Directors (FSD) for our airports.

We were in the process of evaluating bids for important contracts, including hiring and training of airport screeners, and the purchase of equipment to allow us to meet our mandate for screening checked baggage. We had not yet collected any of the security fees that Congress authorized in ATSA, from either passengers or air carriers. National Guard troops were on the scene at airports throughout our Nation. On the local scene, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport was still under restricted flight schedules, causing what we all realized was economic dislocation to the area.

I am pleased to report that aviation transportation security is much better today than it was prior to September 11. It will be better next week, and will be better still once the Department's new, nationwide system stressing consistent and common sense security is fully in place.

On February 17th of this year, TSA took over all civil aviation security functions that had previously been performed or overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Until Federal security screeners can be hired at all commercial airports, TSA entered into contracts with many companies that provide screening services. At some locations, TSA also entered into other transactional agreements with some air carriers to reimburse them for screening services. In doing so, we increased the pay scale for many of these employees to induce them to remain at their posts until Federal screeners are in place. We had great concern that many of the contract screeners would leave, particularly since many of them do not qualify

for Federal screener positions because of their citizenship status. This would have greatly disrupted the commercial air transportation system.

We have published a rule requiring certain aircraft operators using aircraft weighing 12,500 pounds or more to implement a strengthened security program that includes criminal history records checks on their flight crews and restricted access to the flight deck. These security regulations apply to both all-cargo and small scheduled and charter passenger aircraft not already covered by a security program. These new requirements will take effect on June 24, 2002.

We have begun the Herculean task of hiring over 30,000 federal airport passenger screeners for the 429 airports around the country. We have advertised these positions throughout the country and by the Internet. We awarded a contract to NCS Pearson to assist us in reviewing the applicants' qualifications and in testing the applicants for the screening positions. Through them we have hired 900 skilled individuals who are slated to fill Transportation Security Screener Supervisory positions. We awarded a contract to Lockheed Martin to train the screeners in accordance with the new, strict standards established by ATSA and our procedures. The screeners will receive 40 hours of classroom and 60 hours of on-the-job training. We are using a "train-the trainer" concept where a core group of contract employees are first trained. They in turn train other contract employees who serve as the cadre of trainers to train the prospective TSA airport screeners. The training will be rigorous. It is

preparing the TSA screeners in use of sophisticated X-Ray equipment, conflict resolution, sensitivity training, civil rights, and customer service. The students are taught in a classroom setting, in a lab using real world scenarios, and with computer-based training. The students must pass a two-part examination that includes both a written exam and the use of the X-Ray equipment.

On April 30<sup>th</sup> we reached a watershed at Baltimore / Washington International Airport (BWI). At 4:00 a.m., TSA screeners from our Mobile Screening Force (MSF) took over responsibility for passenger screening at Piers A & B. These were the first fully TSA manned checkpoints in the Nation. BWI is serving as our laboratory as we begin to fully federalize the workforce. It is also where we are testing new procedures that will make the screening process not only more effective from a security standpoint, but more passenger friendly and efficient. On May 14, TSA assumed authority over all checkpoints at BWI. The MSF will later move around the country as we continue what we call our "Roll Out" strategy to bring all of the airports on line by the statutory deadline of November 18, 2002. My goal is to set in place a screening system that will effectively screen passengers and move them through the system in 10 minutes or less. BWI Airport is serving as the locale to test this goal. I am encouraged that a recent passenger survey at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport showed that 93% of the participants had a security check-in process of 10 minutes or less.

As part of our goal to educate the flying public and minimize delays in the screening

process, we recently published a revised set of "Prohibited Items" that passengers may not take through a security checkpoint. We have clarified those certain items that previously might have been prohibited, like nail clippers, nail files and tweezers, are now permitted. We are urging passengers to familiarize themselves with this list and to leave these items at home. We want to remind the traveling public of our motto: "No weapons, no waiting". To emphasize the importance of educating the public not to bring prohibited items through airport security checkpoints, from February 17 through April of this year, over 977,000 prohibited items were intercepted, resulting in 302 arrests. We will work hard to educate the public on this.

I am very pleased that we are rapidly hiring our Federal Security Directors for the major airports around the country. Those that have been selected so far are without doubt men and women of distinction. We are fortunate to have them. They come with extensive backgrounds in law enforcement, security and management. We have people like George Nacarra, a retired Coast Guard rear admiral at Boston's Logan International Airport, Gail Linkins of the U.S. Secret Service at Mobile Regional Airport, Leopoldo Vasquez, Jr. retired U.S. Army at the San Antonio Airport, and Willie Williams, former Chief of Police of the Philadelphia and Los Angeles police departments, at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, to name just a few. We have awarded a contract to Korn/Ferry International to assist us in the executive search for more of these fine managers. The FSD will provide the day-to-day operational leadership for Federal security responsibilities at the assigned airports. During a time of crisis, the FSD may be required to exercise the authority of my office, and effectively close and seal an airport,

pending resolution of the event or crisis. I am confident that we have the right men and women for this critical job. While we are selecting the permanent FSD's for the larger airports, we have appointed Interim Federal Security Representatives for all U.S. airports having scheduled passenger service.

Congress established an ambitious schedule for us to provide for screening of all checked baggage with Explosives Detection Systems (EDS) by December 31, 2002. We are working hard to meet that requirement. We have awarded contracts for the acquisition of both bulk EDS, the so-called minivan sized equipment, and the smaller Explosives Detective Trace (EDT) machines. Both machines will enhance our ability to screen all checked baggage and meet the December deadline. We plan to purchase approximately 1100 bulk EDS machines this year. We have already ordered 500 machines and we have assurances from the suppliers that they can meet our needs.

We have also purchased and deployed more than 1100 EDT machines and we expect to acquire a total of between 4,600 - 4,800 for all airports. I realize that the physical installation of the bulk EDS machines is an issue at many airports. We have allocated \$350,000 per airport to help airports offset these costs. We understand that some airports have concerns that this is insufficient. If Congress provides additional direction and funding to increase the amount available for reimbursement we will follow this direction.

We are also facing a great challenge in hiring the necessary employees to operate the explosives detection equipment at the airports. This requirement was not fully considered when ATSA was drafted and the estimates of the number of proposed TSA employees were made. We estimate that approximately 21,500 employees will be required to properly man this equipment so that the aviation system functions on-time. Ultimately, we hope to be able to rotate baggage screeners and passenger screeners so that neither group of employees suffers from boredom and fatigue, a common problem with repetitive tasks.

We have also instituted or planned pilot projects to test different ways to screen all checked baggage at the Nation's 429 commercial airports. The pilot project locations were chosen to provide a cross-section of American airports and to test different configurations of equipment and procedures. We have selected 5 airports in Michigan, Virginia, Maryland, Texas and Florida.

As I testify before you today we are in the process of phasing out National Guard deployments throughout the country. Many have already left. We will complete the phase-out by May 31, when all of the remaining 4600 National Guard personnel will be released. I, along with the Nation, thank them for their faithful service. They have been or will be replaced by state and local law enforcement officers pursuant to agreements that TSA has entered into. These agreements will ensure the traveling public that we have trained law enforcement officers

available to handle any crisis that might develop. We may phase-out these agreements as more and more TSA law enforcement officers are hired and placed at airports. We are aggressively moving forward on this front too. We selected the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia as the home of the new TSA Law Enforcement Academy. We are ramping up its training capability., We will be able to begin to train 200 Law Enforcement Officers a month by July.

I would like to briefly mention the Federal Air Marshal program. Although there is little that I can and should disclose in public, I can assure you that we are working aggressively to put in place a robust Air Marshal program. This will provide another layer of added security during flight operations. We are exactly on track with the targets that we provided to Congress in closed testimony.

We are also working hard in the difficult area of perimeter security at airports. We have convened a Perimeter Security TSA Advisory Council that includes TSA and airport personnel and we commissioned a dedicated perimeter security group to assess security gaps and develop recommendations. We are coordinating with other federal agencies in this task.

I am pleased to report to you that on March 13, I ordered the resumption of full commercial flight operations into Reagan National Airport by April 15, 2002. This is occurring with heightened security measures in place. Now we can move on to restoring General Aviation



and charter airlines operations as well. My Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs testified two weeks ago before the House Government Reform Committee on this subject and we announced that by the end of this month we plan to publish proposed rules in the Federal Register to allow this to occur, again with appropriate security measures in place.

I am also pleased to report to you that we have made great progress in implementing the statutory responsibilities assigned to us for collecting security fees from certain airline passengers and domestic and foreign carriers. We began collecting the September 11 passenger security fees for February 2002 in March. For February we collected \$106 Million, and we collected \$146 Million for March. We expect to receive \$125 Million for the April fee, which is due on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The amount of this fee that we expect to collect each month is variable and is directly related to the number of qualifying passenger tickets that are sold each month. The first payment of the Aviation Security Infrastructure fee imposed on air carriers is also due on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The amount of this fee is based on data that the airline carriers are in the process of providing to us. We expect that the first payment, which will cover the period from mid-February through April 30<sup>th</sup> will be significantly larger than the monthly fees that we will collect thereafter.

While I am on the subject of money, I would note that I fully support the President's

Supplemental Appropriations request that will provide much needed funds not only for TSA but also for the Coast Guard and other modes of transportation. I hope that the Congress will provide these much needed funds so that we can fulfill our statutory obligations.

Up until this point, I have only addressed aviation security issues. I would like to just briefly mention our continuing concern and responsibility for cargo and passenger security in all modes of transportation. We are fortunate to have succeeded in inducing Rear Admiral Richard Bennis, recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, to join TSA as the Associate Under Secretary for Maritime and Land Security. Admiral Bennis is assembling a staff of similarly outstanding professionals that will put together a comprehensive plan to ensure the safety of cargo from its point of origin to its point of destination. This will cover many different modes of transportation and will require the close cooperation of not only other Federal agencies, public port authorities and privately owned railroad, air cargo and trucking companies, but other national governments. We are working closely with the International Maritime Organization to begin the important effort.

While the Aviation and Transportation Security Act gave TSA broad authority for security responsibilities over modes of transportation other than aviation, we realize that specific authorities were not delineated in that Act. Mr. Chairman and Senator McCain, I appreciate the work of this Committee in moving S. 1214, the "Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001"

through this Committee and through the Senate. The Administration strongly supports this bill. I look forward to the House passing its version so that the Senate and House may proceed to Conference.

This concludes my statement. Mr. Magaw and I will be glad to answer any questions of the Committee.